Vol. III. Numb. 54.

THE OBSERVATOR.

Of the Talk of the Town, relating to the late Engagement at Sea. Of the Folly of Parties. The Difference betwixt the Engagement at la Hogue, *and the late Engagement in the* Mediterranean. *Remarks on the List of the* French *Slain and Wounded in the late Engagement. Of the Proviſion for the Sick and Wounded* Engliſh *Sailors.*

From **Saturday** September the 22d, to **Wednesday** September the 27th, 1704.

Obſ. WELL, how is't now; what haſt got this Journey? Any thing worth hearing?

Country-m. I'll leave you to Judge of that. I have ſpent half my Time to ſee the Humours of the Coffee-Houſes, where there is ſuch Confounded Work, the like was never ſeen.

Obſ. Prithee how do the *Ninny-Broth Drinkers* behave themſelves?

Country-m. Why, all their Diſcourſe is a *Victory* or no *Victory*; they Ferret about the Fleet at a ſtrange Rate.

Obſ. And how do they make it out?

Country-m. Why ſome ſay 'tis the greateſt *Victory* that ever was *Known*, after the ſharpeſt *Engagement* that ever was ſeen. Some ſay that Sir *George Rook*'s Fight in the *Streights*, is much Superiour to that of Admiral *Ruſſel*'s at *La Hogue*, others deny it, and affirm the contrary. The whole Coffee-Houſe was in an Uproar; I thought 'em all Bewitcht; and at that very Juncture comes in a Hawker Wench and crys, *All Men Mad, or* England *a great* Bedlam. Thinks I this Wench is in the Right on't, we have here, what ſhe ſays confirm'd in Epitome; thinks *I*, I will buy this Book tho' I drink a Pot the leſs this Journey, and ſo I bought it for your Peruſal.

Obſ. I don't ſay all *Men* are *Mad*, but I think the Acclamations of Parties, is a ſort of Infatuation on Mankind. If we praiſe a Man, let us do it for the Vertues inherent in him, and for his good Services done our Country, without any Reſerves of Private Intereſt. But now we value more the Party than the Man, who if he be but of our ſide muſt be *Wiſe* and *Valiant*, and every thing he does muſt be Extraordinary great; ſo that leaving the Conſiderations of the *Weal Publick*, we dwindle to the mean Conteſt of whoſe *Jacob Hall* Dances beſt on the High Rope of Performent, a Conteſt equal to that of my Childrens, about the Beauty of their Kitlings.

Certainly 'tis the Common Cauſe of *England* that we ought to take Notice of; how the Tree of *Liberty* and *Property* does Flouriſh; how it is defended from thoſe Beaſts of Prey that would devour its Boughs; how the preſent Government and the Succeſſion is likely to be preſerv'd: Now if any Perſons have been Serviceable in this Point we ought to give them due Praiſe, but we muſt not lift them above Mankind and themſelves too, we muſt Remember too that they are well paid for what they do, and that there are Thouſands in *England*, that had they been in their Stations, would have done as much or more.

It looks alſo, as if our Nation did abound in *Treachery* and *Cowardice*, when we make ſuch *Exultations* and *Rejoycings* at a Mans having done his Duty. Time has been in *England* when it was cauſe of Wonder to hear that an Officer had neglected an Opportunity of Fighting, or that he had behaved himſelf Baſely or Cowardly in the Action; but now it ſeems we wonder on the other ſide, and from Real can Rejoyce at Imaginary Victories.

I told you before I'd leave the Conſideration of the Victory at Sea to the Parliament: But I'll never ſuffer the Glory of our Anceſtors to be loſt in a Fog, as the two Fleets were in the *Streights*. We have had many ſharper Engagements in former Days, and thoſe Gentlemen that prefer'd this Victory to that of Admiral *Ruſſel*'s, either wanted *Place*, *Judgment*, or *Honeſty*.

For let one againſt 'tother, Admiral *Ruſſel* made an entire Conqueſt; tho many of his Ships could not come to Engage, he deſtroy'd 14 three Decker Ships of the *Enemy*; the other not one as we can hear of: Admiral *Ruſſel*'s was a Battail Fatal to the Enemy; *France* has never been able ſince that Blow to recover its Fleet in the ſame condition as before. The *French* Fleet in the *Mediterranean* keep their Station, and after ſome Refitting will be able to appear at Sea, and I wiſh in a ſhort time we mayn't hear they are before *Gibraltar*, and have Marr'd our Summers Work.

Indeed Admiral *Ruſſel* had one Advantage, he had Powder and Shot, and the other wanted.

But all Men that are not prejudic'd by Intereſt, muſt own that the Victory of Admiral *Ruſſel*, which is Indiſputable in Point of Conqueſt, was the greateſt Action that has hap'ned for the particular Advantage and Intereſt of *England*, ſince the Revolution. It was a Blow that made *France* ſtagger, being touch'd in the ſenſible part, and had that Blow been follow'd, in all probability, we had not now been engaged in a War. *France* would have been as gentle as a Lamb, when its chief Strength had been taken away.

And tho' *France* ſeems now, like a *Sea-Hydra*, to Erect more Heads of Shipping, and to riſe at the Marine Force of the Confederates, yet the great Head of this Sea-Serpent was ſo bruiſed at *La Hogue*, that the Body ſeems but to wriggle on the Surface of the Sea, and one would think might eaſily be deſtroy'd.

Country-m. Maſter *Obſervator*, here's an Account of the Sea Fight, Printed by *Edward Jones* in the *Savoy*, in a Letter from on Board the *French* Fleet; with a Liſt of the Officers and Perſons of Note, who were Killed or Wounded in the Engagement: Pray will you give us your Remarks upon it.

Obſ. All People ſpeak in their own Favour, and therefore little heed is to be given to Publick Prints. I don't ſee by this Paper that the *French* have any great occaſion to boaſt, but on Account of their keeping the Field of Battle.

They tell us that the *Engliſh* had the Wind, and a Superiority of Ships, which muſt be acknowledg-

ed

with the *High-Flyers*? Does not Her Majesty and the Allies, at this time Confederate with *Popish*-Powers, for the Common Good, and Interest of *Europe*? To compare Great things with Small; why may not the *Hungarians* do the like for their Common Interest?

For my part I don't examine into the Merits of the *Hungarians*: If their Cause be of God, he'll Bless them with Success. But 'tis worthy Observation how these *High-Flyers* are always flurting at them in their Speeches and Libels. These Men of Mischief, that are contented under no Government. The Cause of the *Hungarians* I know they hate, and yet I am sure they wish Success to it, because it does embaras the Affairs of the Confederates; and they'll Grieve heartily at an Accommodation; and they reflect on 'em only in Abuse to the *Protestant* Dissenters in *England*. Go on with your News.

Country-m. Now, Sir, if you please, we'll come to the Sea Stories, and over-haul the late Fight in the *Mediteranean*. Here's the *French* News, pray Sir, see what King *Lewis* says upon his Gazette.

Obs. The Post-Man and the other Papers have given us what they think convenient; but I'll examine the Account a little Nicely. They have Sung *Te Deum* in the *French* Kings Chappel for the Victory; and that they wou'd have done had they lost one half of their Fleet: *Lewis* employs most of his Devotion in Praises and Thanksgivings; if he falls down, and Breaks one of his Legs, he'll thank God that he has not Broke his Neck; and this seems to be a like occasion of Thanksgiving.

But 'tis a Victory, that's for certain; the *French* Fleet has soundly Beaten the *English*; but where are the Evidences? Why only the *Paris* Gazette; and even from that we can conclude but a very imperfect Victory; nay, much less than a Victory. They do themselves acknowledge that they have not taken one of our Ships. They tell us that a Ship of theirs Boarded three times an *English* Ship, I suppose the *Monk*, and left her on Fire, and they could not see whether she Sunk or no, by reason of the Smoak: This is the Main thing that I can find they boast of. I am sure their Victory is so Cloudy and Misty, that one of better Eyes than my self must discover it. Any one of common Knowledge in Sea-Affairs, cannot, from their own Account, conclude a Victory on their side.

Now, let us consider the Account they give of the Numbers of their Slain, which amounts to 1500. I am afraid *Lewis* continues his old Trade of Leasing-Making: Our Account of our Numbers of the Slain, including Officers, is 695, and tho' this is Reputed by some People to be the Sharpest Engagement that ever was seen, we have had Engagements, in which a greater Number have been Kill'd in an Hours time, and I believe full that number in two single Ships; but enough of this.

Our whole Number, including Slain and Wounded, amounts to 2358, that is above 400 less than the *French*; now, who can believe this? The *French* were closely Attack'd by Sir *Cloudesly Shovel*; and by the *English* and *French* Account we must conclude that Sir *Cloudesly* intended a close Engagement: Yard-Arm to Yard-Arm, or to break each Line. I wish each Division had done the like, the *French* would then have told us another Story. But 'tis apparent that the Numbers of the *French* Kill'd and Wounded, must be much greater than they acknowledge; their Ships were double Mann'd, some of 'em, I believe, trebble Mann'd; and I am sure so closely Attack'd by some of our Ships, that among such great Numbers of Men, they must lose more than 1500 Men.

The *French* say that we had the Advantage of the Wind, which indeed is a great Advantage when we Fight in a Line. But if the *French* had been Victors, as they boast, and had destroy'd our Fleet, had they not been to Leward; why did not these Conquerours Engage again on the 15th, when they were to Windward of our Fleet? This seems but an excuse; for certainly when they had an Advantag they would have pursu'd it; and to tell us they have a Victory, when they have not Taken one of our Ships, or Destroy'd one of 'em, that we yet hear of, is a sort of a Bounce no Body can help Laughing at.

Country-m. But, Sir, the *French* had a great Advantage of us, in their Superiority of Guns, they had 600 great Guns more than us.

Obs. I think their Superiority of Men was a greater Disadvantage; to know truly the Superiority of Guns, we must have a List of the *English* Ships with Guns, as we have of the *French*, and then by Computation, know how much each ship, *English* and *Dutch*, was over Gun'd. Were I Commander of one of our Eighty Gun Ships, I should think my self worthy of Death, if I did not Fight the Count *de Tholouse*'s Ship of 120 Guns; and I am certain an *English* Built Ship of 80 Guns, can never miscarry in Fighting a First Rate of *France*, but by Accident, or want of Management.

But the greatest Disadvantage to Her Majesties Fleet was their want of Powder, with which, had they been supply'd, the *French* had never boasted of a Victory.

I shall take Leave of you with one Remark on this Account of the *French*. They keep still to their Old Custom of Reflection on those that do 'em the most Mischief, and of Commendation of such as never design'd 'em any. Witness the Flirt at Sir *Clowdesly*; tho' some Letters from *France* say how much they dreaded his being in the Fleet, and that Orders were given to avoid his Division as much as could be.

Country-m. That's the Practise of their Brethren in *England*, they cry down the Good Men, and extol the Good-for-nothing Fellows. Here's Sir *Clowdesly*'s good Health, with all my Spirit; he's a true Son of the Sea.

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London, Printed and Sold by *J. How*, at the *Seven-Stars*, in *Talbot-Court*, in *Grace-Church-Street*. 1704

Means we have a *Proteſtant* Queen, a Serene and Pious Princeſs at preſent to Govern us, whom God Grant long to Reign; by this Means we have the Sanction of Law, that after her Demiſe, we ſhall be Governed by *Proteſtant* Princes of like Vertues and Heroick Endowments: This is enough to eaſe the Minds of all that Love the Queen and Government, and one would think enough to extinguiſh the Hopes of Evil Men among us; yet I humbly conceive a farther Step may yet be taken to effect this great End, which, the next time we meet, I ſhall ſubmit to the Judgment of others. —— Now let us have a little of the News.

Country-m. Pray, Sir, have you conſidered the News I brought you laſt Journey? We have little New.

Obſ. I cannot paſs over a Remark of the *Poſt-Man's* without notice: He very honeſtly and juſtly diſcovers to the World the Forgery and Villany of the *Bruſſels* Gazetteer, in impoſing upon the World ſeveral Falſhoods in Prejudice of the Confedetates; and how the *Bruſſels* and *Paris* Gazetteer Act in Concert to that end. The Inſtances he gives are Plain and Viſible, and we may ſee how they Correſpond one with the other. And tho' ſome People may make light of theſe Falſe Stories, yet many times they have done great Miſchief to States and Kingdoms.

The Partizans of *France* in *England* carry on the Common Cauſe of Tyranny, after the ſame Method. *Dyer*, the News-Writer, is employ'd by them to diſperſe Falſhoods throughout the Kingdom, in Favour of the Party: When the *Abjuration Bill* paſt the Commons Houſe, this Incendiary, in his News-Paper, ſent thro' the Kingdom an Account, *That that Bill paſt but by one Vote*; intending thereby to Inſinuate into the People, that Her Majeſty had but one Vote Superiour to the Prince at St. *Germains*, when, indeed, that Bill was paſt *Nemine Contradicente* in the Houſe of Commons, not one Member oppoſing it.

Country m. I hope that Fellow was Proſecuted; I am ſure he is a Parlous Wretch.

Obſ. He was Ordered to be Proſecuted: I have enough to mind my own Proſecution, and not other Peoples: But I mention this only to ſhow the Diligence of a certain Party, in ſpreading Falſe News againſt the Government.

Country-m. Maſter *Obſervator*, have you Read the Poem I brought you, call'd *All Men Mad, or* England *a great* Bedlam?

Obſ. Yes, I have look'd it over.

Country-m. What is the meaning of it? Does he prove us all Mad Men, you and I too?

Obſ. The whole World believes you and I to be Mad Men.

Country-m. I can't Fight the whole World, but if any Man tells me that I am Mad, I ſhall make bold to Towel him.

Obſ. Thou art certainly Mad in entertaining of me, when thou doſt not know but it may prove thy Ruin.

Country-m. And you are certainly Mad to bring your ſelf into ſuch Circumſtances as will Ruin your ſelf and me too. What need you trouble your Head about the People, that would Ruin the Queen and Nation? They have got more Money than you; more Intereſt than you; more every thing than you; and what can a ſingle poor Man do againſt great Multitudes and Rich?

Obſ. When I have done what I am able, I have done my Duty, and that every Man is bound to do, let him meet with what Oppoſitions ſoever.

Country-m. You'll get nothing by doing your Duty. In a Conflagration or Ship-wrack, every Wiſe Man will get what Plunder he can. But what does this Rhymatical Fellow mean by his Poem?

Obſ. He Abuſes the Biſhops, and that you know is enough to ſecure him; he has abundance of Inſtances of Security gone before him; he Fights behind Stone-Walls; the Biſhops lie open to the Calumnies of the Mob.

Country-m. Then are our Biſhops to be Abuſed by every Body?

Obſ. It ſeems ſo. All the Libels that have been Written againſt them, have gone Unpuniſhed; and that is Encouragement enough. But no more of this.

Country-m. Then let us Drink a good Health to our *Proteſtant* Biſhops, and depart in Peace.

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